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Schools and Libraries News Brief

April 9, 2010

TIP OF THE WEEK: If you have not yet certified a Form 470 cited on a Form 471 Block 5 funding request, do so [online](#) or on paper as soon as possible. If you wait until your PIA reviewer reminds you of this requirement, your certification will become subject to the [15-day response deadline](#).

Commitments for Funding Year 2009

Funding Year 2009. USAC will release FY2009 Wave 48 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) April 13. This wave will include commitments for approved Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance requests at 80% and above and denials at 69% and below. As of April 9, FY2009 commitments total just under \$2.66 billion.

On the day the FCDLs are mailed, you can check to see if you have a commitment by using USAC's [Automated Search of Commitments](#) tool.

Registration for May Service Provider Training

USAC will hold two one-day training sessions for service providers in May. The materials covered will be the same at both sessions. The dates and locations are:

- Tuesday, May 4 at the Hilton Los Angeles Airport, Los Angeles, California
- Tuesday, May 11 at the Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay, Tampa, Florida

You can register for a training session and obtain information on hotel reservations from the [Spring 2010 Service Provider Training](#) page on the USAC website.

More Information on Item 21 Attachments

In the [March 19 SL News Brief](#), we covered the two main components of the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review process – Initial Review and Final Review. In this issue we are including some tips on the specific information you should provide in your Item 21 attachment(s).

Each funding request (i.e., each Block 5 on your Form 471) must include an Item 21 attachment. The attachment is a description of the products and services contained in that funding request together with the cost of those products and services and the specific information USAC needs to determine eligibility.

By reviewing your Item 21 attachment, your PIA reviewer should be able to understand exactly what you are requesting. Your description of service could be a simple "cellular service with text messaging" or it could be a complicated description of a Telecommunications Service that includes [on-premise Priority 1 equipment](#). In each attachment, you should identify the quantity of products and services you are seeking, their unit costs and extended costs, and the total cost of the funding request. This information should support the total pre- and post-discount costs that appear on the Form 471 Block 5 associated with the attachment.

Following are some specific tips for Item 21 attachments for each of the four categories of service – Telecommunications Services, Internet Access, Internal Connections, and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections. If you include the information suggested in the tips, your PIA reviewer will be able to more easily make determinations of the eligibility of the components of each of your funding requests.

Telecommunications Services

Provide the specific type(s) of service requested. For example, instead of "Telecommunications" or "Telephone service," state "Local and Long distance service." If the specific type of service is not identified, PIA is required to ask for this information.

Provide the number of lines, including the number of extensions. Many entities have a single billed telephone number with several lines or extensions associated with the main billing line. Be sure to include those lines and extensions in your line count. For example, if your school or library has a main line and 12 additional extensions, enter "13" for the number of lines.

For digital transmission services, provide the bandwidth. While some services have a set bandwidth – e.g. a T-1 circuit is 1.544 Mbps – the bandwidth of other services such as wireless or fiber optic service is determined by the service provider. If you are not sure of the speed of your service, check your bill, review your contract (if applicable), or ask your service provider. This information is very important for data collection purposes; as above, PIA must ask you for this information if it is not on your attachment.

If you are submitting a copy of your bill as all or part of your Item 21 attachment:

- **Pick a bill that represents your typical monthly costs.** One month is generally sufficient. Don't send bills for all 12 months of service for the previous year.
- **Make sure the dollar amount of the bill is typical of your monthly costs and supports your request.** A bill for \$100 will not support a request for \$150 per month. Also, a bill for a month when school is not in session may not accurately reflect your typical monthly costs.
- **Include the page(s) that detail any miscellaneous charges and/or credits.** Your reviewer must be able to identify those costs to determine their eligibility.
- **Identify any ineligible charges.** You can submit a bill with ineligible charges – just make sure you clearly identify them. If they are not identified, the PIA reviewer will have to ask you additional questions.

Internet Access

For digital transmission circuit(s) for basic conduit access to the Internet, provide the bandwidth of the services you are requesting. As above, if you are requesting more than one circuit, include the number of circuits.

If you are requesting web hosting services, ask your service provider for a cost allocation and provide it as part of your attachment. The majority of web hosting companies include ineligible tools or content bundled with their eligible services. Clearly mark the total cost of the service as well the percentage of the total cost for which you are seeking funding. For example, if a web hosting company's service is 75% eligible and the service costs \$100 per month, state that you are seeking discounts on \$75 of the \$100 per month and not requesting discounts on the ineligible 25%. By identifying the eligible and ineligible portions beforehand, you will reduce questions from PIA and ensure that you have budgeted sufficiently to pay for your share of the service.

Internal Connections

For all Internal Connections requests, provide the make and model number of any equipment included in your funding request. PIA will ask for this information if it is not already included.

For bundled products, in addition to the make and model numbers, provide the SKU. (The SKU, or stock-keeping unit, is a unique identifying number assigned by a company to each of its products and/or services.) Bundled products often contain ineligible components or features, and USAC works with many service providers to ensure that cost allocations appropriately reflect eligible and ineligible components of bundled service. With this information, USAC can more easily identify and apply the correct cost allocation.

Equipment that can be used in both eligible and ineligible ways should have its function(s) clearly identified. For example, a server can be eligible if used for email but not eligible if used for caching. If you are requesting a web server or terminal server, be sure to state the specific functions it will be performing.

If you are requesting discounts on equipment such as cabinets, racks, and UPSs, identify the equipment they are supporting. These types of equipment are eligible only in proportion to the eligibility of the equipment they serve or house. Although you may be ordering these types of equipment along with fully eligible internal connections equipment, PIA cannot assume that only those eligible items will be housed on the accompanying cabinet or rack or supported by the UPS.

- **If only eligible equipment will be supported or housed, you should state that and provide the make and model numbers of the eligible equipment.**
- **If both eligible and ineligible equipment will be supported or housed, you should provide that information together with an appropriate [cost allocation](#).**

Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections

Provide a list of all of the equipment being supported by the basic maintenance as well as the tasks that will be performed. This list should include the make, model number, and location of the equipment being supported.

Indicate the quantity of the eligible equipment being supported in addition to the make and model number.

If your basic maintenance contract includes both eligible and ineligible equipment, be sure you can provide a clearly identifiable price for the ineligible equipment. (Examples of ineligible equipment include desktop computers and telephones.) Note that we do not recommend having a single contract for both eligible and ineligible maintenance services.

Service provider assistance

Remember that it is entirely appropriate to involve your service provider in the process of creating your Item 21 attachment. Your service provider may have specific details that USAC needs or be able to easily provide network diagrams, SKUs, or other information not readily available to you.

Be sure also to share with your service provider a copy of the Item 21 attachment you submit to USAC. This will help your service provider understand exactly what you are requesting, and will be invaluable during the application review and invoicing processes.

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